AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Withdrawn) A packed column provided with a packing support plate so that a packing is disposed on the packing support plate, wherein:

a packing layer (B) having a greater percentage of voids than that of a packing layer (A) is provided between said packing support plate and said packing layer (A).

2. (Withdrawn) The packed column as set forth in claim 1, wherein said packing support plate is a corrugated packing support plate.

3. (Withdrawn) The packed column as set forth in claim 2, wherein:

said packing support plate is a corrugated packing support plate having openings;

a total area of all the openings in said corrugated packing support plate is in a range of 110 percent to 150 percent of a cross-sectional area of said column; and

an area of each opening is in a range f $25mm^2$ to $2000mm^2$.

4. (Withdrawn) The packed column as set forth in claim 1, wherein at least either said packing layer (A) or said packing layer (B) includes a packing whose Rmax indicative of a surface roughness according to JIS B0601 is not more than 12.5S.

5. (Withdrawn) The packed column as set forth in claim 1, wherein a difference between a percentage of voids of said packing layer (A) and a percentage of voids of said packing layer (B) is in a range of 0.1 percent to 30 percent.

6. (Withdrawn) The packed column as set forth in claim 1, wherein, in the case where said packing support plate is a corrugated packing support plate, a length of said packing layer (B) is 1.1 times to 1.5 times a height of a projection section of said corrugated packing support plate.

7. (Currently Amended) A method for treating a polymerizable compound, comprising employing~~wherein~~ a packed column provided with a packing support plate, a packing layer (A), and a packing layer (B) ~~is employed~~ to ~~treat~~ absorb, distillate and strip a polymerizable compound or a liquid of a polymerizable compound, or extract a polymerizable compound, said packing layer (A) being disposed above the packing support plate, and said packing layer (B) having a greater percentage of voids than that of said packing layer (A) and being disposed between said packing support plate and said packing layer (A).

8. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein said packing support plate is a corrugated packing support plate.

9. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein at least either said packing layer (A) or said packing layer (B) includes a packing whose Rmax indicative of a surface roughness according to JIS B0601 is not more than 12.5S.

10. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein the polymerizable compound is at least one selected from the group consisting of (meth) acrylic acids and esters of the same.

11. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 8, wherein:

said packing support plate is a corrugated packing support plate having openings;

a total area of all the openings in said corrugated packing support plate is in a range of 110 percent to 150 percent of a cross-sectional area of said column at a position where the corrugated packing support plate is provided; and

an area of each opening is in a range of ~~f~~ 25mm^2 to 2000mm^2.

12. (New) The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein the packing layer (B) is provided in a bottom layer of said packed column.

13. (New) The method as set forth in claim 12, wherein a plurality of said packing support plates are provided, and the packing layer (B) is provided in a bottom layer of packing layers above each of said packing support plates.

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 4 of the drawings is submitted herewith.